

Article Alert

No. 5, May 2008

Published by the Information Resource Center, U.S. Embassy Jakarta

About the IRC

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center (IRC) in Jakarta is a specialized Reference and Research Library. Its goal is to provide accurate, up-to-date information to the public about topics such as US. foreign policy, legislation, social issues, economics and trade. High speed Internet computers, printer and photo copier are provided at the IRC for library users.

Books, articles, and websites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessary reflect official U.S. Government policy.

Copies of the articles listed in IRC's Article Alert are available from the Information Resource Center, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Jakarta. Should you wish to receive a photocopy of an article, please complete the ARTICLE ALERT REQUEST FORM (page 4) and return it to us. We will mail or fax the requested articles directly to you, at no cost.

World Press Freedom Day in May



A free press has often been called the oxygen of democracy, because one cannot survive without the other. The French political writer Alexis de Tocqueville noted as much when he visited the United States almost 200 years ago. "You can't have real newspapers without democracy, and you can't have democracy without newspapers," he wrote. Since then, that simple statement has been proven true in nations all over the world. Democracies, established or emerging, de-

pend on the consent of an informed citizenry, and the news media are a primary source of the information people need in order to govern themselves.

Webpage at America.gov about a press freedom as a free press that informs citizens and holds governments accountable is vital to democracy.

Find more articles, e-journals, e-books, journalist profiles, videos and a blog on free press from this address:

<http://democracy.america.gov/democracy/press-freedom/index.html>

More resources are available at:

<http://www.america.gov/st/freepress-english/2008/May/200805041523411xeneerg0.704693.html>

Newseum

A new museum showcases journalism and its impact on world events. The Newseum seeks to broaden the public's understanding of the role of the media and the rights and responsibilities



News Corporation News History Gallery

that come with freedom of expression.

Inside this issue:

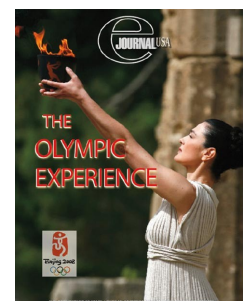
International Press Freedom Day	1
New <i>eJournal USA</i>	1
Democracy and Global Issues	2
Economic Security	2
International Security	3
U.S. Society and Values	3
U.S. and ASEAN	3

New *eJournal USA*: The Olympic Experience

The Olympic Games remind us of certain universal human values. Every Olympian has a story that echoes the shared human struggle for excellence and our devotion to pursue purpose in life. In this issue of *eJournal USA*, we celebrate the Olympics through the individual experi-

ences and insights of athletes who share their memories of the Olympic Experience.

The journal is available free from: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>



DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

1. Brownstein, Ronald THE FIRST 21ST-CENTURY CAMPAIGN (National Journal, vol. 40, no. 16, April 19, 2008)

Brownstein examines the many reasons why he believes that the Democratic battle for the presidential nomination will be remembered as "the first true 21st-century campaign." He believes that the pairing of intense anti-Bush emotions on the part of Democrats combined with major advances in information technology are responsible for creating this new style of campaigning. Brownstein says "this transformation may be changing the model of what it takes to succeed in presidential politics." No longer is television the most important medium, rather it is the ability to leverage the Internet to inspire supporters to fundraise and organize on a candidate's behalf. The Democratic candidates' capacity to raise money,

ability to communicate with supporters at a low cost and capacity of supporters to communicate with like-minded people independently of the campaign has demonstrated the strengths of this new style of campaigning. Brownstein's article provides numerous examples of both Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's successful campaign techniques.

2. Kirshenbaum, Sheril, et al. SCIENCE AND THE CANDIDATES (Science, Vol. 320, 11 April 2008, p. 182)

In a few months, many in the U.S. science and engineering establishment, along with those in business and journalism, have joined the ScienceDebate2008 initiative, a call for the presidential candidates to engage in a public debate on science and technology policy. The need for such a debate could not be more

The need for such a debate could not be more obvious, on issues ranging from the environment to medicine and health. But the public rarely hears detailed discussion of these issues from the candidates and none of the candidates has agreed to such a debate. In an increasingly complex world, science will become ever more intertwined with policy issues. This effort has made the candidates aware of how critical science policy issues are, whether they show the courage to debate them or not. Their responses to this initiative will be on record and will form a basis for future development.

3. Messitte, Zach THINKING LOCALLY BEFORE ACTING GLOBALLY: THE RISE OF SELECTIVE PROVINCIALISM (World Literature Today, vol. 82, no. 2, March/April 2008, pp. 34-39)

Messitte, Professor of Geopolitics at the University of Oklahoma, assesses a variety of contradictory trends in the world today – such as globalism vs. provincialism, democracy vs. autocracy, "McWorld vs. Jihad." He draws from a wide range of sources – including writings of public opinion makers, polls from Pew, and US government officials. He asserts that some of the concepts of globalism are supported by majorities around the world, but there are "real concerns about a growing borderless world where capital, labor, and ideas flow freely and are unfettered." Messitte's students are positive about the future, concluding that, in 20 years, they hope for "great leaps forward in transportation and science, an overall improvement in their quality of daily life, and freedom and democracy in more parts of the world."

ECONOMIC SECURITY

4. Astyk, Sharon PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS: HOW EXPENSIVE IS FOOD, REALLY? (Grist, posted April 14, 2008)

In earlier agrarian societies, it was commonplace to spend a lot of money on food; low food prices of the past half century is an anomaly, generated by large-scale agriculture requiring massive energy and fertilizer inputs. However, Astyk notes that we cannot regard food prices in isolation from society as a whole; while food prices may have been low, the cost of housing has skyrocketed, and people must work long hours to pay for all the dependencies

created by the modern industrial economy. Large-scale urbanization has meant that the price of land has become divorced from the value of what it can produce. Low food prices has meant low compensation for farmers -- only a small number of massive agribusinesses are able to survive. The rise in food prices that has resulted from increased energy costs will eventually require a return to localized agriculture, which will benefit farmers, and will mean that land and house prices will have to return to a level at which they are tied to the value of the soil beneath them.

5. Boudreaux, Karol; Cowen, Tyler THE MICROMAGIC OF MICROCREDIT (Wilson Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 27-31)

Is microcredit the solution to poverty in the world? No, say the authors, both with George Mason University. Although microcredit is undeniably making people's lives better around the world, it is not pulling them out of poverty. "It is hard to find entrepreneurs who start with these tiny loans and graduate to run commercial empires," they write. Many lenders refuse to extend microcredit to startups. "The more modest truth is that microcredit may help some

people, perhaps earning \$2 a day, to earn something like \$2.50 a day," the authors say. Not a dramatic improvement, but definitely a step forward to a poor person in many third-world countries. An important advantage to microcredit is that unlike many charitable services, microcredit is capable of paying for itself. "The future of microcredit lies in the commercial sector, not in unsustainable aid programs," the authors say.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

6. Goldsmith, Arthur A. **MUSLIM EXCEPTIONALISM? MEASURING THE "DEMOCRACY GAP"** (Middle East Policy, vol. 14, no. 3, Fall 2007, pp. 86-96)

Democratization of the Muslim Middle East is a foreign policy goal of the Bush administration; democracy is lacking in many Islamic countries, though the root cause is unclear. The author, professor at the University of Massachusetts, uses a couple of measures, including the Freedom House Index, to refute

claims that democracy and Islam are irreconcilable. Dr. Goldsmith concludes that every country is unique and generalizations about a particular society and its incompatibility with democracy should never be made.

7. Kimball, Daryl; Pomper, Miles **A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: AN INTERVIEW WITH NUCLEAR THREAT INITIATIVE CO-CHAIRMAN NUNN** (Arms Control Today, vol. 38, no. 2, March 2008, pp. 6-12)

Former Senator Sam Nunn discusses a range of topical issues relating to strategic and tactical nuclear weapons as well as U.S.-Russian and Russian-NATO relations in a wide-ranging interview with the magazine's editors. He says one of the stumbling blocks for nuclear weapons states to reduce their stockpiles even further is a psychological dependency on them. If those weapons are made less important and relevant, then associated reductions will be easier to achieve, he says.

Nunn also emphasize how important it is to work with Russia on missile defense. He also advocates extending the missile launch times for the United States and Russia and warns of the danger to both countries of having their command-and-control systems penetrated by hackers -- either individuals or rogue organizations or governments.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

8. Carnevale, Anthony **COLLEGE FOR ALL?** (Change, vol. 40, no. 1, January/February 2008, pp. 23-29)

The American belief in "college for all" stems from our egalitarian nature, and is rooted in parents' desire in upward mobility for their children. The author notes that a post-secondary education does make a significant difference in salary of a worker; between 1979 and 1999, the earnings differential between a high-

school diploma and a college degree rose from 43% to 73%. The lower the education level of the worker, the lower is the proportion of jobs available to those job seekers. Carnevale writes that the popularity of post-secondary education in America is that it "has become our workforce-development system, in part because it has taken on a strong occupational and professional profile." College in America is increasingly moving away from a purely lib-



eral arts education, and is more focused in giving graduates specific skills that can be

used in their future careers. Yet, Carnevale notes, "a liberal-arts degree topped off with a graduate or professional degree still brings the highest returns, especially when both degrees come from the most-selective postsecondary institutions." The challenge for the United States now is that, in the face of the increasing expense of post-secondary institutions, the "college for all" promise develops into reality.

U.S. & ASEAN RELATIONS

9. Catharin Dalpino, U.S.-**SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATIONS: DOMESTIC DRAMA AND A NEW PATH TO ASEAN**, A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations, Georgetown University, April 2008

On a bilateral level, U.S. relations with Southeast Asia held steady in the face of complicated political transitions in Thailand and Malaysia. Incremental gains were seen in secu-

rity ties with U.S. allies and partners in the region -- Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore -- while two issues remaining from the Vietnam War era complicated relations with Vietnam and Cambodia. Although the U.S. is no closer to signing the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, three new initiatives with ASEAN were put on the table in early 2008, suggesting an alternative path to a stronger re-

gional role for the U.S. However, Burma's deteriorating situation casts a long shadow over U.S. bilateral and regional relations with Southeast Asia. The regime's determination to go forward with a constitutional referendum in May is creating new fissures within the region and will make it more difficult for Washington to pursue comprehensive plans of any kind to strengthen relations with ASEAN.



U.S. Embassy Jakarta
Public Affairs Section
Jl. Medan Merdeka Selatan 4-5
Jakarta 10110

Phone: (021) 350-8467
Fax: (021) 350-8466
E-mail: ircjakarta@state.gov

Mail label here

ARTICLE ALERT REQUEST FORM NO. 5, MAY 2008

Please write your complete name and address IN CAPITAL LETTERS, check (✓) the articles and send your request for May 2008 Article Alert items to the Information Resource Center, U.S. Embassy, before July 2008 via fax (021) 350-8466 or email (IRCAalert@state.gov)

Name: _____ Position: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone/HP/Fax: _____ Email: _____

1. ☐ THE FIRST 21ST-CENTURY CAMPAIGN
2. ☐ SCIENCE AND THE CANDIDATES
3. ☐ THINKING LOCALLY BEFORE ACTING GLOBALLY
4. ☐ PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS
5. ☐ THE MICROMAGIC OF MICROCREDIT
6. ☐ MUSLIM EXCEPTIONALISM? MEASURING THE "DEMOCRACY GAP"
7. ☐ A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
8. ☐ COLLEGE FOR ALL?
9. ☐ U.S.-SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATIONS

Special Offer:

- ☐ New *eJournal USA*: The Olympic Experience

**INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA**

**A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FIND IN-
FORMATION ABOUT THE UNITED
STATES FOR FREE**

CONTACT US AT:

Phone: (021) 350-8467

Fax: (021) 350-8466

E-mail: ircjakarta@state.gov